

# *Tale* **Feathers**

May 2002

Volume 69  
Number 5

## June Meeting is for the Birds

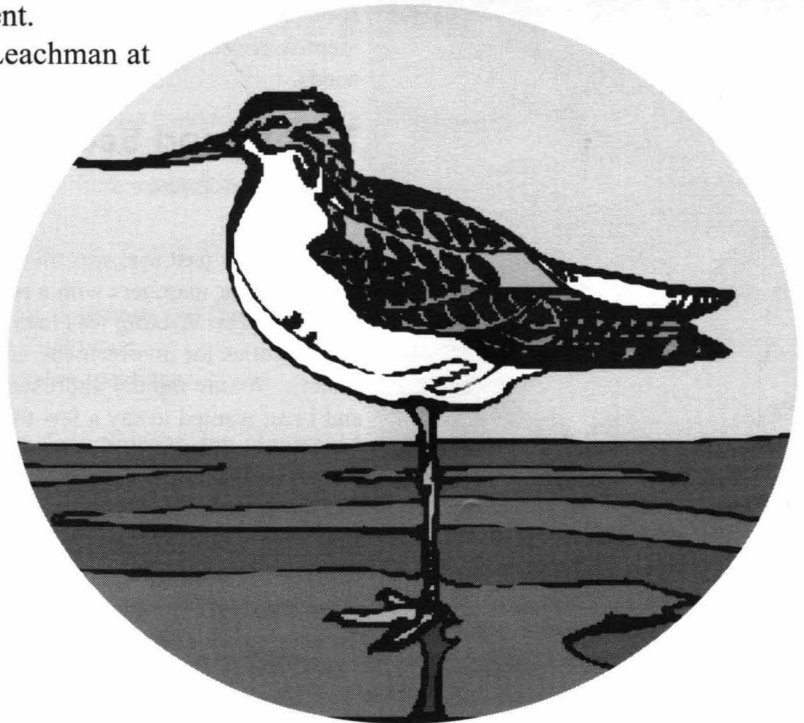
Mark your calendar for **Tuesday, June 18 at 7:30 p.m.** at the Creve Coeur Community Center.

The evening's speaker will be Michael Macek, Curator of Birds at the St. Louis Zoo. He will discuss the numerous bird conservation projects the zoo is involved with worldwide. Some of those projects are assisting such birds as the Piping Plover, Laysan Teal, and White-Winged Wood Duck.

Also, meet other society members and discover opportunities for involvement throughout the organization. Open to all, members or not. Refreshments will be available.

From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go 1/2 mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. Community Center is in the basement.

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.



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**St. Louis Audubon Society**

## MEMBER NEWS

This month continues our series of profiles of St. Louis Audubon members. **Dency Kahn** was elected to the board in May 2001

### **Describe your educational background?**

I have a Bachelor's in Zoology from Mount Holyoke College, and two Master's degrees, an M.S. in Zoology and an M.A. in Library Science, both from the University of Iowa.

### **How would you describe your current occupation?**

I retired in June, 1999 from Washington University, where I was the Engineering Librarian for the School of Engineering. I am currently working part-time at St. Louis Community College at Meramec as a reference librarian.

### **What is your current function/role with SLAS?**

I became a member of the Board of Directors in May 2001. I have volunteered to help with the committee looking for office space for the chapter's materials, especially educational materials, and with publicity.

### **What is your #1 conservation concern at any level, local to global?**

Educating the next generation of nature advocates. I have chosen to do so through the St. Louis Zoo, where I am a docent. For two years I have been part of an outreach program targeting fourth graders in inner-city schools

### **In what ways can NAS or SLAS address this concern?**

I think NAS could help best by providing materials and ideas. SLAS already has an active education program. I have gotten interested in the Audubon Centers during my tenure on the board, and I think we need to know more about the programs already operating in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area to identify constituencies not being served and try to fill some of their needs.

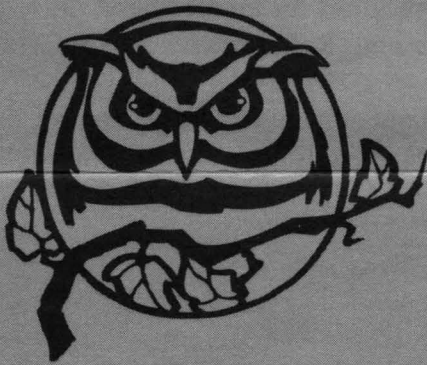
## **Thanks and See You in the Fall**

*Mitch Leachman*

This past summer, the Board of Directors renewed the Society's commitment to providing our members with a regularly scheduled monthly forum-the General Membership Meeting. The Meeting was intended to help members learn about the organization and opportunities for involvement, and included a featured speaker on a topic relevant to the society. We are rapidly approaching our summer hiatus (July and August are down months), and I just wanted to say a few things.

First of all, a big **thank you** to all our speakers: Michael Dixon from Two Rivers NWR, Toni Armstrong and Richard Spener on the Arctic NWR, Desiree Sorensen-Groves from National Audubon, Pam Flowers on her dogsled adventure, and Paul Bauer on the wildlife of South Africa. We started slow but ended with a great turnout with over fifty people at Paul's presentation. Which brings up my second point, **thank you** to all our members for coming out and taking an interest in your St. Louis Audubon Society.

Lastly, although we will not publish a newsletter in June, we will have our final Meeting on June 18th with Michael Macek, Curator of Birds at the St. Louis Zoo (see separate announcement). And, please remember to watch your mail in late summer for our newsletter and see what speakers we have lined up for the fall. Our first year was a great success and I am sure next year will only be better.



# Conservation Report

*Sue Gustafson*

## **Hands-on Bird Conservation: Songbird Rescue**

I was very pleased to learn that St. Louis Audubon presented Carol Kershner, Director of Wild Bird Rehabilitation, with its Conservationist of the Year Award at our annual general meeting on April 14th. I have had the privilege of serving as one of Carol's volunteers for the last eight years, and this has entailed taking care of numerous species of injured and orphaned songbirds. Birds face so many obstacles to survival and reproduction - such as loss of habitat (be it a macro-habitat or loss of a tree that served as a nesting cavity), predation by cats/dogs, flying into windows and buildings, or being hit by a car - that it's nice to know that rescue clinics such as Wild Bird Rehabilitation (WBR) exist. In 2001, WBR volunteers provided care for 72 species of birds. Several of my favorites were Cedar Waxwing, Scarlet Tanager, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Warbler, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Orchard Oriole, just to name a few.

WBR is always in need of more volunteers, particularly during the nesting season in spring/summer. Duties are varied and can include hands-on bird care, cleaning cages, feeding nestlings, or just doing the vast amount of dishes that pile up with so many hungry baby birds to feed. Volunteers usually work one shift of four-five hours per week - morning, afternoon, or evening. I have found this to be a very rewarding way to contribute to bird conservation. Long-term commitments aren't required, and even if you can only volunteer for several months during nesting season, it would help out tremendously. Every little bit helps! No experience is necessary and training is provided. WBR is located at 10040 Big Bend in Kirkwood, at the I44/Big Bend intersection. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the clinic at 314-984-9116, or feel free to contact me at 314-968-8128 for any additional information. Be a volunteer - make a difference!

## **Notes from the President**

I wanted to take a little space in Tale Feathers and brag about the accomplishments of the last year in our chapter. For an all-volunteer board, a lot was achieved.

- " Our Chapter adopted Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge.
- " Our Education Committee has give programs that have reached 2500+ students in 6 school districts and two garden clubs.
- " Our Education Committee kicked off the Master Naturalist Program with St. Louis Community College at Meremac.
- " Our Conservation Committee in conjunction with a co-alition of other environmental organizations helped defeat the Church Mountain Development proposed by Ameren UE.
- " Our Conservation Vice-President obtained a grant from U.S. Fish & Wildlife to study bird mortality in urban areas due to building lights, during migration.
- " Our Finance Chair raised \$30,000+ through charitable donations and fundraising. This will allow our chapter to assist in a Least Tern habitat restoration project and donate property to Riverlands.
- " Our Program Chair jump-started our general membership meetings.

As you can see, it has been a busy year. The Thanks go to:

Vicki Flier, Pat McCormick, Sue Gustafson, Mitch Leachman, John Solodar, Jim Malone, Mike Grant, Paul Bauer, Anne Bolte, Bill Brandhorst, Dency Kahn, Mary Smidt, Joe Eades, Tom Day, Lynn Breakstone, Julie Leamann and last, but definitely not least, Laverne Koyn and the telephone Volunteers. Without these folks, our chapter would not be successful.

I also want Thank everyone for his or her support during my tenure as President. I will continue to serve in various capacities, but now I turn the reigns over to Bill Salsgiver, who returns to do another stint as president. Good Luck, Bill and to everyone else:

**Enjoy Life...Go Birding!!**

# You are Invited to: A Wildlife and Birding Safari to South Africa October 11-21,2002

A wildlife safari is the most exciting adventure of a lifetime! Don't miss this one. Join us in "their" spring. We use expert local guides, a relaxed pace, and budget costs. All air fare from the United States is included in group rates.

Ken Newman is perhaps the best known South African bird guide and field guide artist/author. With Ken we visit three private game reserves : Mala Mala adjacent to Kruger National Park; Ndumo; and Hluhluwe. Each has different habitat to ensure the largest number of birds and mammals are found. Three internal flights are included to save travel time between game reserves.

Southern Africa has a bird list that exceeds 900 species and over 100 of these birds are endemic. Many of these endemic species are found in the Cape Town area. An optional four day extension is offered to experience this scenic Cape area. We explore along the coast to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, visit several major nature reserves including Cape Point NR and False Bay to Boulders Beach with its Penguin Colony and spend a full day at the huge West Coast NP. We also visit Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens including its many birds. Included are two pelagic boat trips to historic Robben Island and Duiker Island.

On our last trip we viewed over 320 species of birds and about 45 species of mammals including the Big Five up close and personal!

FOR ITINERARIES OR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

PAUL BAUER at 314-921-3972

ALSO SEE OUR WEB SITE:

[www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org)

## Habitat Restoration at its Most Fundamental

*Mitch Leachman*

On a beautiful, sunny, 50 degree Saturday morning in March, a small team assembled at a parking area near the Brussels Ferry outside Grafton, Illinois. Although the call for volunteers had gone far and wide (or so I thought), the team consisted of just three adults and a teenager-Sue Gustafson, Mitch Leachman, John Mabery (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), and his son, Sam.

Their reason for gathering was habitat restoration of the Gilbert Lake area of Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge. The habitat restoration had taken the form of a trash cleanup that was targeted to remove as much trash from the main levee area as possible. Regrettably, trash is the simplest and quickest way that humans damage wildlife areas, but fortunately, it is also the easiest to address.

In only about three hours, the team's impact was readily visible. In addition to the hundred or so expected bottles and cans, they found and retrieved a bundle of vinyl siding, several tires, a car headlamp, a plastic patio chair and several pails, two duck decoys, several light bulbs, and a water heater! They even flagged a grounded river buoy for pick up later by refuge staff. Of course, Audubon members will not let the birds go unnoticed and observed pelicans, ruddy ducks, cormorants, pileated woodpeckers, a bard owl, and several bald eagles.

A trash cleanup is not glamorous and can be difficult, but it is a most basic form of habitat restoration. There was no doubt by that afternoon that they had made an impact-the piles and bags of trash were the evidence. However, human nature being what it is and river flood events providing assistance, the need for future cleanups is assured. Please watch this newsletter for a cleanup day in the fall, and I sincerely hope you can find the time to help restore a little wildlife habitat.

# Make Way for the Migration

*Jim Malone*

The first week or two in May is the high point of spring migration in St. Louis. If you only go out to look at birds once a year this is the time to do it! We have a number of walks planned for this period. Check out this list of events.

**May 5 (Sunday) Tower Grove Park, 7:30 AM** This is the beginning of International Migratory Bird Week. When you think of migrating passerines in our area, you simply can't do better than this location. Last year at this time we had days where we saw more than 20 species of warblers at Tower Grove. To get to this walk, take Kingshighway South from I-64 or I-44 to Magnolia. Turn left on Magnolia and follow it East to the stop light. Turn right (into the park) and then turn right on the first road inside the park. Follow this road to the northwest end of the park. We will meet by the Gaddy bird garden.

**May 11 (Saturday) Tower Grove Park, 7:30 AM** This walk is being sponsored by the Wild Bird Marketplace of Manchester, MO. We will meet at the store in the shopping center at the northeast corner of Manchester and Baxter in Manchester, MO. at 7:30 AM. We will carpool from there to Tower Grove, and enjoy the sights!

**May 12 (Sunday) Forest Park, 8:00 AM** The other great St. Louis location which is a must visit during migration is Kennedy woods in Forest Park. The variety of habitats is wonderful, and as a "green" zone in the middle of the city, it serves as a real magnet for migrating warblers. To reach this event, take the Hampton Avenue exit North from I-64 and into the park. Follow Concourse road to Washington, and turn left. Near the entrance to the Zoo, turn right at Fine Arts Drive and go up the hill. Turn left into the parking lot just before the Art Museum and go through the parking lot to Valley Drive behind the Museum. Turn right on Valley and park behind the museum.

**May 18 (Saturday) Hunter's Ford / Route 66 State Park, 7:30 AM** Shortly after the peak of migration, we will be visiting two areas we have not offered walks to before. Hunter's Ford and Route 66 State Park are both parts of the Meremac Greenway developed along the Meremac River near the St. Louis area. This trip will include lots of deep woods birding, river's edge forays, and a good range of birds. Since this trip will last into the afternoon, bring a lunch and something to drink. To get to the meeting place, take the Lewis Road Exit off of I-44 near Eureka, MO and travel North to the park Visitor's Center. We will carpool from this location to Hunter's Ford and into Route 66 state park.

**June 8 (Saturday) Lost Valley Trail, 7:30 AM** This walk is being offered as a chance to see the breeding species in St. Louis in a location known for good variety. We should find lots of Orioles, breeding Warblers, Tanagers, Thrushes, and lots of other interesting birds. To get there, take Route 94 South from I-64 on the St. Charles side of the Missouri River. Travel about 6 miles down 94 to the parking area for the Weldon Springs Lost Valley Hiking and Biking trail. This parking lot is on the right side of the road at the bottom of a hill.

Come and join us for these migration walks. The birds are really dressed in their finest and singing vigorously.

# Least Tern Observers Needed

For a number of years members of the St. Louis Audubon Society and WGNSS have been negotiating with the Army Corps of Engineers to implement some sort of strategy which would enable the endangered Interior Least Tern to successfully resume its former nesting habits in the greater St. Louis area.

These negotiations have finally born fruit as a result of a sharing agreement which was worked out between some birders and the Corps. The Audubon Society will have legal and financial responsibility for part of the agreement, but we need many birding volunteers, regardless of affiliation, to carry out that portion which requires area birders to monitor the site during the summer of 2002 and to document the breeding activity that we hope to see.

The Corps has completed work on a new island which was cut off the tip of Ellis Island. This island should be above the level of the summer navigation pool which has flooded out previous attempts by the least terns to nest on temporary mud islands in Ellis Bay. The island has been covered with sand and lined with rip-rap and a channel has been constructed to deter predators. Signs will be posted warning boaters to stay away.

The monitoring work will be done from a blind which should be constructed by a group of volunteers before mid-May. Since this blind is at the end of Ellis Island, the Corps has promised us that we will have a key to open the gate at the Ellis Island parking lot in order drive the one mile distance to the blind. There is a solid parking area at the end of the road and a 150- 200 ft trail will be completed to the blind. The road appears to be readily passable by an ordinary passenger car. Paul Bauer, among others, has visited the blind site and describes the view as, "Stunning."

We have agreed to a schedule of 2 hours of observation per day for 3 observation days per week. The days during each week are not to be contiguous. The 2 hour period can be anytime from sunrise to 10:00 am.

The Corps would like us to conduct this survey from May 15 - August 31.

The peak of nesting, according to Rochelle Renken, is during the last two weeks of June. However, the ultimate goal is successfully fledged chicks so we will continue monitoring into August to determine how successful the least terns are.

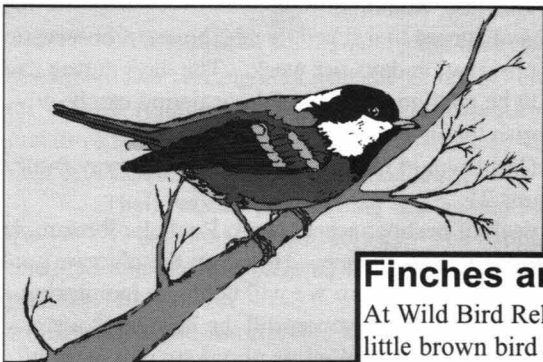
While we expect that most volunteer observers will have an ability to identify the least terns and the other birds that will be on the island, that is not a prerequisite. There will be a good number of experienced birders to teach newer birders the identifying marks of the terns, ring-billed gulls and common shorebirds that might be present. If you would like to volunteer please contact John Solodar at 314-862-5294 or [orsolodar1@mind-spring.com](mailto:orsolodar1@mind-spring.com). Tell him when you will be available and he will arrange the schedule. If you can do an entire week, that would be fine.

If you would prefer to spread the days out over the summer, that will work too.

## Scholarships and Awards

As of this year, the SLAS will be offering a yearly scholarship to a St. Louis area graduate student doing research in an area compatible with the mission of Audubon. Thanks to much-appreciated help from Dr. Owen Sexton, our first recipient has been chosen: Mr. Kevin Matson, a PhD student at the Univ. of Mo. in St. Louis. The selection criterion was the relevance of a project for increasing knowledge of ways to restore ecologically threatened systems and/or threatened taxonomic groups. Mr. Matson is doing research on the immuno-competence of the avifauna of the Hawaiian islands, and Dr. Sexton believes that his research can be of great importance in understanding factors responsible for the demise of birds on various oceanic islands. We congratulate Mr. Matson and our thanks go to Dr. Sexton.

The St. Louis Audubon Society awards committee has selected two teachers, Jean Siesener and Brandi Gremaud to receive camp scholarships for 2002. They will both be attending the Audubon camp in Maine. Jean is a sixth grade science teacher at Ladue Middle School. The April issue of Tale Feathers featured an article about Jean coaching her school's Science Olympiad group that competed at the state level last month. Brandi is a first year science teacher at Pacific High School. Jean and Brandi are both eager to share the knowledge they gain at the camp with their students and fellow teachers.

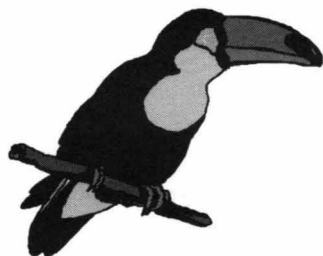
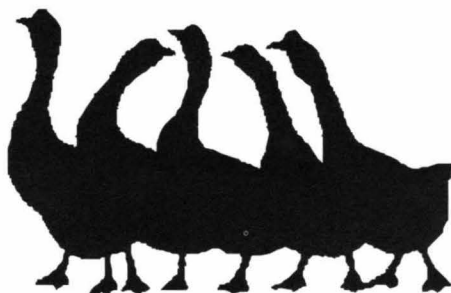


### Finches and CONJUNCTIVITIS.

At Wild Bird Rehabilitation we often get telephone callers saying the following: "There's a little brown bird on my feeder and I think he's blind." The "little brown bird" is a female House Finch. They, along with the males, look blind because their eyes are swollen and often matted closed. What is wrong is an outbreak of conjunctivitis, or an infection of the area surrounding the eye, often including some sinus involvement. This is spread, apparently, through contact at feeders. It can be spread by direct contact or sneezing. IT IS NOT CONTAGIOUS TO HUMANS. This disease seems to have only affected House Finches, and possibly Purple Finches. A course of antibiotics halts the infection, and most birds treated will be ready for release after three weeks. So far WBR has only lost 2 finches who had secondary problems. Our recommendation to those of you who have feeders and baths is to keep them clean, using a 5% to 10% solution of bleach water daily. Some people keep a covered container of the solution handy and wipe down their feeders each time they are filled.

## Welcome New Members!!!

Jayashree Balakrishna  
Robert bidstrup  
Cyrus and Carolyn Blackmore  
Julie Briscoe  
Carol Clooney  
Laura Cohen  
Marian H Coffman  
Phillip Delano  
M. Erlanger  
William Evans  
John and Lois Goodman  
Susan Goodrich  
Michelle Grewe  
Jerry M. Hemmersmeyer  
Jan Herweg  
Ann Weber Hoyt  
Arnold Safron  
Gertrude Schieble  
Debra Schoen  
James Seidel  
Claudia Seifert  
Marjorie Stelmach  
Roger Still  
Lenore Streett  
Jerry and Darlene Sugerman  
Marlene Tassi  
Nadine Varner  
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Vatterott  
Rob and Barb Vogelsang  
Mr. and Mrs. E. Young



### St. Louis Rainforest Advocates

SLRA, St Louis Rainforest Advocates, invites everyone to a free talk at the **Missouri Botanical Garden on Saturday May 4 at 7:30 pm.** The speakers will be Beth Congdon and Kimberly Holbrook, Phd Candidates from ICTE, International Center for Tropical Ecology at the University of Missouri - St. Louis.

They both received grants from SLRA to do field work in the tropics last year. Their talk will be a "report from the field" about howler monkeys in Belize and toucans as seed dispersers in Ecuadorian Amazon.

## Tale Feathers

*Tale Feathers* is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2500 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Anne Bolte edits the newsletter.

### St. Louis Audubon Society 2001 - 2002

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VP Finance - John Solodar	314-862-5294
Treasurer - Mary Dueren	314-576-1473
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#### **Attention!**

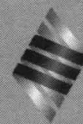
See you in August. *Tale Feathers* is taking a two month hiatus. Send inquiries to Anne by

E-mail [ambolte@swbell.net](mailto:ambolte@swbell.net)

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### Special Thanks!

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This form makes you a member of **both** the National and St. Louis Audubon.

Audubon is a membership organization dedicated to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Our members are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. By becoming a member, you will receive National Audubon Society's magazine as well as the St. Louis Audubon Society newsletter, *Tale Feathers*.

## St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

### Membership category desired:

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